

Hizb ut-Tahrir: 21 arrests

HRWF (11.02.2015) - On 5th February 2015 FSB officers arrested 21 Muslims suspected of belonging to "Hizb ut-Tahrir" in Ufa, in the surrounding areas and in Chishminsky (Republic of Bashkortostan, also known as Bashkiria). They were charged with organizing and participating in a terrorist organization (Art. 205.5 of the Russian Criminal Code). Four of them got prison terms from 7 to 11 years. "Hizb ut-Tahrir" movement was banned by the Russian High Court on 14th February 2003 because it was accused of aiming to overthrow the government and to establish a caliphate in Russia.

On 4th February 2015, 30 homes were searched and literature pertaining to the organisation was confiscated. It was later used as evidence against the defendants, since "Hizb ut-Tahrir" literature has been added to the *Russian federal list of extremist material*.

Among the detainees was Rustem Latypov, Chief of the Muslim Problems Research Center, who was previously prosecuted under art. 282-2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation for cooperation with "Hizb ut-Tahrir". As a preventive measure the court put him under arrest for 50 days. A criminal case under art. 205.5-2 of the Criminal Code was filed against him on 28th January 2014.

Among other arrested people were Linar Vakhitova, leader of the "For the Rights of Muslims", as well as other public figures: Rustem Galliamov, Ilgiz Gimaletdinov, Rishat Gataullin, Danis Fayzrahmanov, Rafaela Fattakhova, Ruslan Fattakhov, Rinat Nurlygayanov, Radik Akhmetov, Ayrat Ahmetshin, Ramil Davliev, Dinis Timashev, Farid Mustafayev, Oleg Zianguirov, Ruslan Rizvanov and others.

Some of the detainees, according to "Kommersant", have already been tried for participation in the "Hizb ut-Tahrir" movement.

Earlier this year, the Moscow District Military Court opened a criminal case against four activists of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" from Bashkiria: Evgeny Kulagin native of Uzbekistan, Rasim Sataev, Alexei Hamadeevu and Aydar Garif'yanov. They were accused of attempt of seizure of power and indicted under art. 278 of the Criminal Code. The maximum penalty for this article is 20 years imprisonment. Cases against another 34 alleged members of the organisation are under investigation, said the FSB.

Almira Zhukova, a public defender of the Hizb ut-Tahrir activists, denounced the lack of transparency and numerous violations of human rights during the trial, involving false witnesses and the use of some evidence in unsealed bags.

Moscow-based Sova-Center considers that the prosecution of members of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" on the grounds of terrorism as unlawful.